

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/648,356
Amendment filed March 1, 2007
Reply to OA dated December 1, 2006

REMARKS

Claims 1 - 7 and 16 - 19 are canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer, in this patent application.

Claims 8 and 15 have been amended in order to more particularly point out, and distinctly claim the subject matter to which the applicants regard as their invention. It is believed that this Amendment is fully responsive to the Office Action dated December 1, 2006.

Claims 8 - 15 and 20 are currently pending in this patent application, claim 8 being the sole independent claim.

Claim 16 is objected to because of an alleged informality in the wording of this claim. The applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this objection.

As indicated above, claim 16 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Thus, the outstanding objection of claim 16 is now moot. Accordingly, the withdrawal of the outstanding claim objection is in order, and is therefore respectfully solicited.

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Further, claims 8 - 15 and 20 are rejected under 35 USC §112, second paragraph, for the reasons set forth on pages 2 and 3 of the outstanding Action. The applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this rejection.

As indicated above, claims 8 and 15 have been amended in order to more particularly point out, and distinctly claim the subject matter to which the applicants regard as their invention, and in order to correct certain informalities therein, including those pointed out by the Examiner.

Accordingly, the withdrawal of the outstanding rejection under 35 USC §112, second paragraph, is in order, and is therefore respectfully solicited.

As to the merits of this case, first, claims 16 - 17 and 19 are rejected under 35 USC §103(a) based on U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2001/0031365 to Anderson. Second, claim 18 (set forth on page 5 of the outstanding Action) stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a) based on Anderson in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,222,967 to Amano. The applicants respectfully request reconsideration of these rejections.

As indicated above, claims 16 - 19 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Thus, the outstanding rejections of these claims are now moot.

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Accordingly, the withdrawal of the outstanding obviousness rejections under 35 USC §103(a) based on U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2001/0031365 to Anderson, and under 35 USC §103(a) based on Anderson in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,222,967 to Amano is in order, and is therefore respectfully solicited.

In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, claims, as amended, are in condition for allowance, which action, at an early date, is requested.

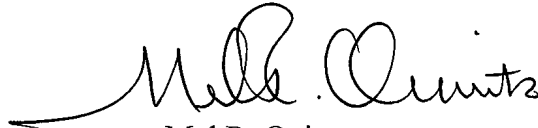
If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the applicants' undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

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In the event that this paper is not timely filed, the applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

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